

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand. Not only should phone bills be truthful and easy to understand, with all the mandatory charges that have nothing to do with the length or number of calls clearly explained in plain language, but consumers should also have a choice. In my neighborhood, for local service, it's SBC, that giant based in Texas, or

nothing. I have switched to Working Assets for my long-distance service. They are a socially conscious

company, which donates a portion of revenues to worthy social causes, and also provides a very easy way for customers to

donate a little each month, painlessly by 'rounding up' their bill to the next dollar, which all

adds up for the good of needy causes of importance., And, I receive a free

pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream each month from them as well as receiving excellent service. But I

have never felt good about being forced to do business with SBC, which appears to have a monopoly in our area. I grew up

when monopolies were against the law, and this prohibition is an important part of

capitalism in a democracy. Sadly, monopolies are no longer un-lawful Capitalism is supposed

to be based on the company that provides the best product or service winning the customers. With monopolies, and

especially combined with government subsidies, the whole idea of capitalism, which was once based on competition for the

consumer's vote and dollars, is completely obviated. We live in a state of utter corporate rule now, with little, if any government regulation of private business, and this at a time of seeming corporate moral decline. It is a very sad and dangerous thing.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.